The Elementary English Review

SPECIAL NUMBER
READING

The Elementary English Review

Established, 1924, by C. C. Certain

J. L. Certain, *Editor*

Table of Contents

From ADAM OF THE ROAD, by Elizabeth Janet Gray.
Illustrated by Robert Lawson. Viking, 1942.

A Study of Reading Growths in the Primary Grades

C. DeWitt Boney
Principal, Nassau School

Julia E. Lynch
First Grade Teacher, Nassau School
East Orange, New Jersey

THERE ARE three methods frequently used in dealing with the difficulties experienced by some primary children in learning to read: extensive pre-reading experiences; intensive early teaching of reading; and delaying teaching of reading. Pre-reading experiences have had greatest use during the past fifteen years. It was quite natural that much should have been expected from these reading readiness programs, for it was reasonable to believe that the wider experiences of all sorts which they attempted to provide were the elements necessary for success in reading, and furthermore they appeared to suit very well the apparent nature of the little child. But for the most part, work with pre-reading experiences has been disappointing. Studies[1,2] have shown that the reading readiness program has had some, but not a great amount of influence upon the reading program. The slow first grade readers remained slow even though they had these experiences. It is true—and herein lies the primary contribution of the reading readiness program—that through these pre-reading experiences the child is helped greatly in his all-round development.

Twenty years ago it was generally believed that the way to get a slow child to read was to begin early and persist in his reading. Of course it was believed that good methods played an important role in reading success, but underlying this was the belief that success could be attained through an early beginning of instruction. This idea was disputed by the introduction of the reading readiness idea. Within the past five years the idea of teaching slow readers through an early introduction of reading has gained new adherents. This rally to an old method came about primarily because of the fail-

[1] Risser, Faye and Elder, Harry E. "The Relation Between Kindergarten Training and Success in the Elementary School." *Elementary School Journal*, V. 28, p. 286, Dec. 1927.

[2] Burke, Marjorie. "Kindergarten-Reading Readiness," *American Childhood*, V. 19, pp. 12-13. Dec. 1933.

ure of the reading readiness program to enhance appreciably the progress of slow readers, and because of the high correlations obtained by several research workers between success in reading and early experiences with this tool. "Teach the letters to kindergarten children," so said Wilson and others, because "reading readiness is in reality reading progress."[3] This conclusion was reached after it was found that those children who knew their letters in the kindergarten experienced little difficulty with reading. The fact is that this observation was made many years ago. It was also recognized that for many children, especially those who found it very difficult to memorize their letters, this feat was an advanced form of reading. It is not likely that an intensification of reading instruction of this type for young children, even though it be done in a most playful way, will prove very popular among those who witnessed the struggle that many children had with letters and parts of words two decades ago. The hope is expressed by several writers that new materials can be created for young children that will act at least as a partial solution of this problem.

There has long been an opinion that beginning reading instruction should be delayed until a child was eight or nine, and some even said ten years of age, but public schools gave little thought to these minority voices before 1930. Within the past few years, Thomson,[4] Biglow,[5], and others have arrayed strong arguments for delaying reading. These students never sought to determine the forces necessary for successful reading. They only observed that generally as children grew

3 Wilson, Frank T. *Reading Progress in Kindergarten and Primary Grades.*

4 Thomson, Jennie Lloyd. "Big Gains from Postponed Reading." *Journal of Education,* V. 117, pp. 445-446, Oct. 15, 1934.

5 Biglow, Elizabeth B. "School Progress of Under-age Children." *Elementary School Journal,* V. 35, pp. 186-192, Nov. 1934.

older mentally and chronologically, they acquired the greater powers necessary for successful reading. We in the Nassau School have noted this influence of maturation. To attribute this growth to anything but normal wholesome living would be running the risk of great error. Recently we observed the growth of 124 students from the third grade through the upper grades. At the end of the third grade 55 per cent of these students were above their grade level; and at the end of the fifth, sixth and seventh grades this percentage had increased to 70. Again, over a five-year period we observed 34 who were below their grade norm at the end of the first grade, gradually gain until 23 had approached their grade norm by the end of the fifth grade. The correlation between the reading scores in the first grade and the fifth grade for this group is .09. There is some evidence here to support the opinion that as children grow older and are given adequate attention, they respond at a rate that greatly excels anything they are able to do in the early grades. Space does not permit an adequate description of our intermediate reading program. It is sufficient to say that our instruction is individualized. It frees the able students to read a great variety of materials, and thereby affords more time for the teacher to spend with the peculiar needs of slow students.

This gradual rise in ability of students who were slow to learn in beginning reading has raised a question in our minds of the worth of spending a great amount of time in the first and second grades with children who experience unusual difficulty with this tool. In 1937, we studied the growth of twenty children through the primary grades and found that it took for some slow children from six to ten times as much teacher time to produce a month of reading growth in the first

grade as it did in the third grade. For example, Jack B. used 560 teacher-minutes to grow one month in the first grade, 680 teacher-minutes to grow three months in the second grade, and 850 to grow twenty-eight months in the third grade. We expressed the belief then that it would probably do no harm and that it would relieve a great amount of suffering if first grade reading instruction was eliminated for some children. However there was one factor that kept us from launching upon this experiment. We were not sure of our instruments of measurement. We had used Gates, Detroit, and Metropolitan Reading Tests, but we were unwilling to believe entirely in the validity of scores made upon a test at a single sitting. We reasoned that perhaps the students were learning more reading skills than were measured by these tests. At the same time we felt reasonably sure that little was accomplished from the point of view of attitude. There was some evidence that the strain of learning to read in these grades built to some degree an aversion for this tool. We therefore undertook to conduct a three-year experiment with children to determine, with as high degree of accuracy as possible, growths in the beginning reading skills.

The experimental group consisted of six classes in the Elmwood[6] and Nassau Schools of East Orange. Of the 183 who began the experiment, 108 took the final reading test at the end of a three-year period. The total group consisted of about as many religions, races, and cultures as can be found within America. The intelligence quotients were between 90 and 115 for 82 per cent of the group. The methods of teaching beginning read-

ing consisted primarily of two types. Three teachers used a purely individualized approach. Through this procedure each child began to read from books, usually pre-primers and primers, that best suited his interest and needs. The time that a child began his daily reading instruction in the fall was dependent also upon the teacher's interpretation of the child's interest and needs, but all children were required to have daily instruction in reading by December first. Three teachers used the group reading approach, limiting instruction in its initial stages to a specified vocabulary. All teachers did a certain amount of word drill and gave phonetic clues where they saw there was a need. Children were encouraged to do a great deal of independent reading. The testing was done by the Works Progress Administration, Project Number 1479-7. Each child was tested upon the new words he had encountered during a month. To create such an individual test it was necessary for the Works Progress Administration Staff to analyze all of the reading materials that a child used during a month. The test words were typed singly and each child was tested individually by the examiner's pointing to a word and the child's pronouncing it. The words recognized were recorded and eliminated from subsequent testings. These tests were given until the examiner felt that the child was able to pass the beginning second grade norm of the Metropolitan Reading Test. Should a student fail to reach this level of attainment, the vocabulary tests were continued and he was given another form of this test at a subsequent date.

For consideration here we shall confine ourselves to the records of the 108 students who remained for the duration of the experiment. Growth of a year or more was made by 28 pupils dur-

6 The following members of the Elmwood staff co-operated in the making of this study: Dr. Hayward, Mrs. Bristow, Mrs. Hadley, and the Misses Hamilton, Thompson, Atkinson, Kloppenberg, Sawyer, Hillman, Hunter, Lyons, and Chase.

ing the first year, 1937-38; 66 were dismissed from the testings in the year 1938-39; and the remaining 14, save 3, were dismissed in the year 1939-40. The total group appears to have been a normal one as far as progress in reading is concerned, with one exception. There were too few students who attained second grade standard by the end of the first grade. The number, 28, is approximately 15 per cent lower than usual. It does indicate, however, that we have come to accept without trepidation a standard of reading in the first grade that we would not have accepted several years back. Our staff has accepted it because of the general feeling that a great drive in the first grade is futile and also because there is a great need for more time in the first grade for other things that are apparently better suited to many students.

Our study was made primarily to determine growths that first grade children made in the acquisition of reading skills. Particular attention was to be directed to those pupils who read very little in the first grade. There were 36 children who made an average growth of only three months during that grade. Their growth through the primary grades resembles that of other slow pupils whom we have observed. Their mean growth in the first grade was three months while their mean growth in the second and third grades was twenty-four months. Only three pupils acquired more than 100 words. The mean number of words learned was 58. The average number of words per testing for those children who were dismissed in the third year was 2.9 the first year, 16.7 the second year, and 36.5 the third year. This is evidence that few skills are acquired in the first grade by pupils such as these. However, the correlations between the words acquired in the first year and reading progress at the end of the third grade for these 36 students is .75. The correlation between reading scores for this group at the end of the first and the third grade is .48. These compare favorably with those found in recent research which show the relationship of a knowledge of letters in the pre-reading stages with later success in reading. But it must be remembered that these correlations show only relationship; they do not indicate the effect varying amounts of reading in the beginning first grade or kindergarten might have upon later success in reading. They do not indicate what would happen in the third grade if no reading was done in the first grade or if the present amount was doubled. It is sufficient for us to conclude at this point that few skills are acquired by slow readers in the first grade.

The way in which these children progressed in word-acquisition did not become apparent until near the end of the second-year's testing. At the close of the third year, however, when all the individual records were carefully charted, it became clear that for each student each stage of growth was marked by its own capacity to acquire words. These capacities seem to be definitely limited in area. While a student is in a 5-15 words a month capacity area, there is a strong probability that he will not in any month make a word score of less than five or more than fifteen. When he moves on to a 30-50 words a month capacity area, he probably will not make another score in the 5-15 area; he probably will not make any score outside the area until he is ready to move on to the next one. Out of 1025 testings, there were found only 20 extra-area scores.

Had the word tests been given at shorter intervals, this progress from one capacity area to another might have become apparent earlier in the experiment.

The progress of the children dismissed in the first year was so rapid that the monthly scores seemed to show a series of spurts or a slow start followed by a spurt. The following scores were made by a child who attained second grade level at the end of the fourth testing: 12, 34, 76, 186. This looks like a series of steps rather than progress from one area to another.

Many of the somewhat slower cases show this same kind of rapid increase in capacity after progress through one or more well-defined areas. The following case is illustrative: his scores for the first three testings were 19, 17, 18. Then he made 60, 82, 102.

A typical area case among those dismissed the first year is the child whose scores read 4, 2, 23, 53, 52, 51. At the beginning her capacity was two to four words a month. Then with one intermediate step to 23, she went into a 51 to 53 a month capacity area.

As we study still slower cases, those dismissed in the latter half of the second year, and especially those dismissed in the third year, it becomes increasingly clear that the children are moving from one area to another. In the one case the scores were 0, 8, 11, 10, 8/ 25, 21, 40/ 91. For the first five testings, this child (whose mental age at the start of the experiment was 8.4) was in a 0-11 area. Then she moved on to a 21-40 area. The new area marked by the one score of 91, was reached as her testing ended.

Case 82, with scores of 14, 6, 23, 10, 20/ 81, 109, 75, 95, 78, 120/ has just two areas: 6-23 and 75-120.

In Case 100, with scores of /0, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2/ 7, 5, 12, 23, 7, 9, 15, 18/ 32, 44, 47, 58, 51, 56, 52/ there are three definite areas, one for each year. In the first year the child was in a 0-2 area; in the second year, in a 5-23 area; in the third year, in a 32-58 area.

In some of these cases, it will be noted that there is a gradual rise through the area, while in others there is more or less fluctuation.

Case 93 shows both types of progress with the following scores: 5, 0, 1, 2, 5, 3, 5/ 10/ 32, 51, 66, 83, 93. In the first year there is fluctuation in a 0-5 area. Then, by an intermediate score of 10, the child mounts to an area through which there is a steady rise from 32 to 93.

Case 23 is an instance of steady rise through an area with scores of 13, 15, 23, 35, 43, 67. In no month is the score less than before.

Cases 99 and 105 are outstanding fluctuation cases.

Case 99 remained for all three years fluctuating in a 4-19 area. His scores were: 8, 0, 7, 10, 13, 7, 6, 15, 16, 4, 17, 8, 18, 19, 11, 10, 17, 17, 9, 6, 18. It is significant that there is no considerable increase in the yearly totals: the first year, the total was 60; the second, 97; the third, 88.

In Case 105, after an initial stay at 0, continued for the three years to fluctuate between 5 and 40: 0, 0/ 6, 7, 8, 5, 7, 10, 13, 27, 25, 34, 40, 31, 11, 6, 9, 17, 19, 27. In the second year it rose as high as 34; in the third year it dropped as low as 6.

One statement can be made concerning these records of early reading years, to which there are no exceptions. Whether the child's progress is fast or slow, there is never any regression from a high to a low area. No case ever goes from an area of, say, 15-25 to one of 5-10. This statement would not hold in later years, of course, since it must hold that the larger the reading vocabulary becomes, the smaller will be the number of new words encountered. But during these

initial years at least, when capacity can be fairly measured by actual acquisition, the progress seems to be to higher areas only.

Is it possible for us to account for the way these children grew? Perhaps the most plausible reason that can be advanced for the slow growths of many students in the first grade and rapid growths made in the second and third grades is a difference in expenditure of teacher-time and in materials and methods. We used almost every type of material on the market, and we did not bar any methods that a teacher believed would work. We believe that the great amount of individual instruction used is generally considered ideal whenever it is possible. Vocabulary burden is considered by several authorities to be most significant in the beginning reading instruction. We found that we had used for the first two thousand words read a vocabulary burden that is considered very light (one new word introduced to every twenty-six running words) and a vocabulary burden that is considered very heavy (one new word introduced to every ten running words), but this factor had little or no relation to success in reading. The correlation between success in reading and vocabulary burden at the end of the first and third years was .36 and .16 respectively. Furthermore, there seemed to be slight difference between the results of extensive and intensive reading. The classes that approached beginning reading through a very limited vocabulary had as many slow children as those who made this approach through extensive reading with little regard to vocabulary. Indeed it was most interesting that extensive and intensive reading methods had almost no advantage over each other for teaching a child when he was in a particular area of growth. This shows in the following sets of parallel cases:

	Case No.	I.Q.	Area
Int.	21	101	11-43

Duration Record

1 yr. 15/13*24/17 53/23
　　19/11 53/43 54/42
　　31/20 . . . .*Total* 249/169

	Case No.	I.Q.	Area
Ext.	33	100	7-39

Duration Record

1 yr. 35/10 96/11 72/17
　　74/7 100/35 217/39
　　215/17 . . . .*Total* 809/136

*Under *Record* and *Total* in each case the figure at the left of the / is the number of words the student was tested on; that at the right is the number recognized.

Note that these children had intelligence quotients of 101 and 100 respectively and that the areas, 11-43 and 7-39, differ by only four at either limit. But in every month the child under extensive reading instruction (Case 21) encountered more new words and therefore was tested on more words than the child under intensive reading instruction (Case 33). Case 21 made the highest score—43—at the end of a month in which only 53 new words had been encountered. Case 33 made the comparable highest score—39—out of 217 new words. The year totals are also significant. Case 21 made a total score of 169 out of 249 words tested on, while Case 33 made a total of 136 out of 809.

Although there are a number of such parallel cases, two differences do become apparent when the entire group under intensive reading instruction is compared with the entire group under extensive reading instruction. On the one hand, extensive reading tends to produce more first scores of 0 or 1 and more later scores of 0; but on the other hand, it tends toward earlier movement from one area to the next. Of the children who reached

second grade level during the second year, 29 per cent of the extensive readers remained in one area for the entire first year as against 51 per cent of the intensive readers.

A most significant problem for this study is the cause for this rise in power of the slow students. Could it be that the teachers gave more time to the poorer students in the third grade than they did in the first grade? That they did so undoubtedly accounts for some of the growth in the third grade. As has been previously stated, there has been a growing feeling that a too intensive drive upon beginning reading for young children who find it either uninteresting or very difficult or both, yields little result except an aversion for this tool. The proportion of low scores for our whole group in the first year reveals a general lessening of the emphasis upon first grade reading. It is true, then, that these slower readers were not worked with as prodigiously in the first grade as they once would have been. Furthermore, it is true that as the faster readers became independent in the second and third grades the teachers were able to free themselves from these students and spend more time with the slower students. Suppose we imagine that the teacher's time was twice what she gave in the first grade, which was not the case at all, it would be difficult to believe that that could account for the fact that the average first grade score for students who were dismissed in the third grade was one word, while the average score for these students in the third grade was 43 words.

Now that we conclude that our methods are not solely responsible for the growth of these children, we examine those forces that are closely associated with nature. Our correlations of chronological age and mental age with success

in reading are very low. The correlation of chronological age and reading success at the end of the first and third years are —.03 and .04 respectively. While the correlation of mental age and reading success at the end of the first and third years are .26 and .49 respectively. These correlations reveal a thing that was obvious from the very beginning: that the best readers were not always the children who were mentally and chronologically the oldest.

We do observe a high relationship between growth in reading, and ability to retain words and interest in reading. The former is much higher than the latter. We have had many cases who were decidedly interested in reading and who worked prodigiously at the task, but were unable to retain words or even parts of words to an appreciable degree. They retained a few, of course, but the results of their labor were very small in comparison with the progress others were making and in comparison with what they themselves were able to make at a later date. This early struggle is apt to be discouraging.

Case 93 was a little girl of normal intelligence (I.Q. 101) who was most eager to learn to read, but whose most earnest application to her task produced a total of only 21 words recognized by the end of the first year and a reading grade of 1.2. In the first six months of the second year, however, under the same teacher, she rolled up a total of 335 words and made a reading grade of 2.1. In June 1940 her reading grade was 4.0.

Summary and Conclusion

This study reveals that children who experience difficulty with beginning reading acquire few words and little enthusiasm for the subject during the first year, and in some cases even in the second and

Why Read?

WILMA LESLIE GARNETT
Associate Professor of English
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

YOU MAY recall that Schopen-
hauer's advice to persons who may
read too much was this, as found
in his essay "On Thinking for Oneself":

> Reading is a mere substitute for original
> thought. In reading, one allows one's own
> thoughts to be guided by another, in lead-
> ing strings. Besides, many books are only
> good for showing how many false paths
> there are, and how seriously one may miss
> one's way if one allows oneself to be guided
> by them; but he who genius guides—he,
> that is, who thinks for himself, thinks of
> free will, thinks correctly—he has the com-
> pass to find the right way. One should only
> read when the source of original thoughts
> fails, which is often enough the case even
> with the best heads.[1]

Schopenhauer would, it seems, have
the greatest minds desist from reading
occasionally in order that time might be
available for creative thinking; but even
in the cases of the genius minds, there
will be need for reading as a source of
stimulation for thinking when the original
source fails. If this be true for the master
minds, how much reading must be needed
by the average persons as an inciter of
thought. Most persons, then, may profit
by reading if they will reflect upon the
ideas presented therein and use their re-
flections as spring-boards for creative
mental activity.

Now these words apply to the art of
reading as practiced by both adults and
children and have in them many implica-
tions for the reading programs as carried
on in the schools today; such implications
as:

1. Material that will stimulate think-
ing is that which should be made avail-
able to the child by the school.

[1] From the translation given in Robbins and Coleman.
Western World Literature. Macmillan, 1938.

2. The child should be taught to re-
flect upon what he reads and should be
stimulated to think as creatively as he
can in connection with his reading.

Perhaps there are only a few people
who read to excess—few who need the
admonition of Schopenhauer; probably
there are many people who need to be
taught to read. Reading is a powerful
avenue of learning—one which no civil-
ized person can afford to ignore in the
present era. But one of the major ques-
tions before the schools today is, why
should the schools teach reading? Know-
ing how to read widely is not an essential
for all persons engaged in making a
living. Their bread-and-butter earning
power is not conditioned by ability to
read poetry, plays, stories, and many
other types of literature. Recently I read
in the *Bulletin of the American Youth
Commission* that:

> More than half of 4,740 occupations, in
> which are a majority of the nation's gain-
> fully employed persons, have no formal
> educational requirements, according to on-
> the-spot analyses by the Job Equivalents
> Project, United States Employment Service.

> Eleven per cent of the remaining occu-
> pations require a grammar-school educa-
> tion; the same proportion, a high school
> education; and one per cent, college.
> Twenty-two per cent require some educa-
> tion, but the amount specified varied wide-
> ly among different employers. Previous
> experience is a requirement in two-thirds;
> nine out of ten require some training on
> the job; and in half the instances this
> training is given in one week or less. In
> ten per cent of the occupations, training
> could be obtained in periods varying from
> one week to one month; in fifteen per cent
> from one to six months; and in only four
> per cent did it take more than six months.

The 4,740 occupations analyzed by the project cover 45 industries and form approximately one-fourth of the separate occupations defined in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* of the United States Employment Service. Agricultural employment, however, is not represented; professional workers and those of managerial rank are not adequately represented. Findings now available are subject to change as the study extends to other occupations and industries. It would appear, however, that the sample is now of such size that the changes to be expected are not great.[2]

This account raises the question; how well do most people need to read? How well do the 22,000,000 American elementary school children need to read? Some of them surely need to read well— those with the obligation which they will for some reason assume of transmitting the literary heritage. Others will not *need* to read *widely.* According to Dr. McKee,

Investigations by Parsons and Farnsworth have provided data on the amount of reading done by nearly 1000 adults, and the relation of certain factors to the amount read. Their data show that the average amount of time spent daily in reading by 1000 persons was slightly more than one and one-half hours. . .

Sightly more than 50 per cent of the people involved in the studies read books, more than three-fourths read magazines, and 97 per cent read the newspapers. Of the one and one-half hours spent in daily reading more than 40 minutes was used with the newspaper, approximately 28 minutes was spent in reading books, and 24 minutes in reading magazines.

Donovan secured data on the withdrawals of books from the Chicago library, during 1923. More than one-half the books withdrawn were fiction.[3]

It would seem, however, that although all persons may not need reading for its economic values, all normal persons could profit by worthwhile reading material. They would benefit by thinking

2 *American Youth Commission Bulletin,* Volume V, Number 4 May, 1941.

3 Paul McKee, *Reading and Literature in the Elementary School.* Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 26, 29.

the best thoughts of others. As Addison says in one number of *The Spectator*:

Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to posterity of those who are yet unborn.

Surely it is worth while to bring a good book and any child together. That is the teacher's function in connection with reading, it would appear, the objectives in this work being: (1) To teach a child to think about the thoughts of others while reading; (2) To help a child develop his own power to think creatively through contact with great thoughts that are his book heritage.

The remark that one cannot get all his education from radio and movie is surely timely. The book has, among other advantages over these popular avenues of learning, the fact that it is a source to which one can return again and again for further reference and study. Other advantages are evident. It would seem advisable to hold to reading as one very important avenue of learning and to supplement it and re-enforce it with all other avenues—hearing, observing, doing, and creating.

In these troubled times when nations are being made or destroyed by educational programs, it behooves the people of the United States to see that the school program in reading is constructive and worth developing and perpetuating. In a recent article in *School and Society,* Dr. Lyman Bryson is quoted as saying:

People must come to know the importance of reading and learning. That is the soundest way of solving their problems. If at this time they do not learn to solve their problems, and the problems of this democracy, then democracy is not going to survive.

A man cannot think unless he can also learn. He must have access to knowledge.

This is a difficult time to be asking men to learn to think. But this is the most important time. To learn to think freely as against authority and humbly before facts. The fight for knowledge and the fight for democracy are the same battle. Western men love freedom. You can take it away from them only if first you cut them off from knowledge.[4]

Because reading is the background of the American educational program, that subject should be well taught with proper regard for worthy objectives by presentation of the best in reading materials and by the use of natural, scientific and artistic techniques.

The new program as being developed in our schools is placing emphasis upon individualization of instruction. Best teaching has taken that form for so long that nothing new can be claimed for it. Go to the biography of Alexander the Great as given by Plutarch and you may read a significant note about individualized instruction and another about the results of that kind of teaching:

(On individualized instruction)
. . . and now looking upon the instruction and tuition of his youth to be of greater difficulty and importance than to be wholly trusted to the ordinary masters in music and poetry, and the common school subjects, and to require, as Sophocles says,
The bridle and the rudder too,
he sent for Aristotle, the most learned and most celebrated philosopher of his time. . .
(Results of individualized instruction)
Among the treasures and other booty taken from Darius, there was a very precious casket, which being brought to Alexander for a great rarity, he asked those about him what they thought fittest to be laid up in it; and when they had delivered their various opinions, he told them he would keep Homer's *Iliad* in it.[5]

Books came to be Alexander's treasures.

Even today, in a public school situa-

tion in which a teacher may have thirty pupils, individual instruction is possible. Artist teachers are individualizing the first instruction in the use of certain techniques of reading in the work-type reading period. They are socializing their work in the leisure-type reading period. Children proficient in a given kind of reading as taught to them in the work-type period share their reading experiences with others by dramatizing, by reading stories or poems aloud in an artistic manner, or by doing many of the other interesting things one can do with fine selections. By recognizing the close relationship that exists between child and adult personality—especially that what a child reads is in large measure determinant of the patterns for adult personality—the artist teacher is giving the child a chance to gain command over the techniques of reading and is helping him to develop his powers by exchanging his reading experiences creatively and artistically with others.

It is gratifying to see that certain reading programs include these features today:

The teacher individualizes at least half the instruction.

The children who have been coached to read well take part in the period of socialized reading.

The procedures used are like those used in life.

Speech training is included as a phase of training in reading.

Correlations are made with music, painting, history, and other subjects until we find a humanities program on the elementary level in some schools.

Experiences in science, travel, and the like are brought in as basic to understandings.

4 Lyman Bryson, *School and Society*, V. 53, No. 1380, p. 722. June 7, 1941.
5 Plutarch, "Alexander," from the translation given Robbins and Coleman, in *Western World Literature*. Macmillan, 1938.

Linguistics and Reading

LEONARD BLOOMFIELD
Department of Linguistics
Yale University

ANY LARGE gain in the speed and effectiveness of reading instruction in our schools would bring great advantage to the community. Saving years of every child's school time, it would open the way for other improvements in education. To the writer of this essay it seems very likely that such a gain could be effected with small trouble beyond what is involved in the discarding of a few long-established prejudices.

As to motivation and as to most aspects of classroom procedure, our reading methods have been admirably developed; the time should be ripe for the application, in the schoolroom, of the facts about reading which today are recognized by all professed students of language. A procedure which takes account of these facts, when tried out with individual children, has proved very successful. Trial in the classroom can be made only with the co-operation of schoolmen. It has been begun on a small scale; the present writer would be glad indeed if this essay should lead teachers and school authorities to co-operate in such attempts.

In this essay I shall outline the main facts about reading which are known to linguists. These facts will here be set forth somewhat dogmatically, since space forbids an account of how they were discovered; such an account would have to tell a large part of the history of linguistic science during the last hundred years.[1]

The art of writing is not a part of language, but rather a comparatively modern invention for recording and broadcasting what is spoken; it is comparable, in a way, with the phonograph or with such a recent invention as the radio. Every human society that has come within our ken possesses a fully developed language, but, until recently, only a few communities have practised writing. Until one or two centuries ago, moreover, in communities like our own, which practised writing, this art was carried on only by a very small minority of the population.

Writing is merely an attempt, more or less systematic, at making permanent visual records of language utterances. It is evident, of course, that by learning to read and write, the individual greatly extends his linguistic horizon and that such developments as the growth of his vocabulary are from then on largely tied up with his reading. Nevertheless, it is a great mistake to confuse the acquisition of literacy with the acquisition of speech: the two processes are entirely different.

Writing seems in every instance to have grown out of *picturing*. Picturing (or *picture writing*) consists in drawing pictures to represent a message. The elements in the pictures, such as figures of different animals, are conventionalized, so that one need not depend too much on draughtsmanship.[2]

The important feature of picture writing is that it is not based upon language at all. A reader who knows the conventions by which the pictures are drawn, can read the message even if he does not understand the language which the writer speaks. If the reader knows that the picture of an animal with a big tail means

---

1 This history is very interestingly presented in H. Pedersen's *Linguistic science in the nineteenth century*, translated by J. Spargo, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1931.

2 The best examples are to be found in G. Mallery's study, published in the 4th and 10th *Annual Reports* of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1886 and 1893.

a beaver, he can get this part of the message, even though he does not know how the word for a beaver would sound in the writer's language. In fact, he can read the picture correctly, even if he does not know what language the writer speaks. Without going too far into the psychology of the thing, we may say that the reader does not get the speech-sounds (the words or sentences) which the writer might use in conversation, but he gets the practical content (the "idea") which in conversation he would have got from hearing those speech-sounds.

The second main type of writing is *word-writing*. In word writing each word is represented by a conventional sign, and these signs are arranged in the same order as the words in speech. Chinese writing is the most perfect system of this kind. There is a conventional character for every word in the language. Each character represents some one Chinese word. As the vocabulary of a literate person runs to about twenty thousand words, this means that in order to read even moderately well, one must know thousands of characters. Learning to read Chinese is a difficult task, and if the Chinese reader does not keep in practice, he is likely to lose his fluency.

It is probable that word writing grew out of picture writing; at any rate, in the systems known to us, some of the characters resemble conventionalized pictures. However, the difference between these two kinds of writing is far more important for our purpose than any historical connection. The characters of word writing are attached to words, and not to "ideas." In picture writing you could not distinguish such near-synonyms as, say, *horse, nag, steed,* but in word writing each one of these words would be represented by a different character. In picture writing very many words cannot be represented at all—words like *and, or, but, if, because, is, was,* and abstract words like *kindness, knowledge, please, care*—but in word writing each word has a conventional symbol of its own.

We ourselves use word writing in a very limited way in our numerals, and in signs like &, +, —, =, and the like. The symbol 5, for instance, by an arbitrary convention, represents the word *five,* and there is no question of spelling or sound involved here: the symbol is arbitrarily assigned to the word. The characteristic feature of word writing, from the point of view of people who are used to alphabetic writing, is that the characters, like 5 or 7, do not indicate the separate sounds which make up the word, but that each character, as a whole, indicates a word, as a whole. Viewing it practically, from the standpoint of the teacher and pupil, we may say that there is no spelling: the written sign for each of the words (four, seven, etc.) has to be learned by itself. You either know that the character 7 represents the word *seven,* or you don't know it; there is no way of figuring it out on the basis of sounds or letters, and there is no way of figuring out the value of an unfamiliar character.

Word writing has one great advantage: since a character says nothing about the sound of the word, the same characters can be used for writing different languages. For instance, our numeral digits (which, as we have seen, form a small system of word writing) are used by many nations, although the corresponding words have entirely different sounds.

The third main type of writing is *alphabetic writing.* In alphabetic writing each character represents a *unit speech-sound.* The literate Chinese, with his system of word writing, has to memorize thousands of characters—one for every

word in his language,—whereas, with an alphabetic system, the literate person needs to know only a few dozen characters,—one for each unit speech-sound of his language. In order to understand the nature of alphabetic writing we need to know only what is meant by the term *unit speech-sound,* or, as the linguist calls it, by the term *phoneme.*

The existence of unit speech-sounds or phonemes is one of the discoveries of the language study of the last hundred years. A short speech,—say, a sentence,—in any language consists of an unbroken succession of all sorts of sounds. Systematic study has shown, however, that in every language the meaning of words is attached to certain characteristic features of sound. These features are very stable and their number ranges anywhere from fifteen to around fifty, differing for different languages. These features are the unit speech-sounds or phonemes. Each word consists of a fixed combination of phonemes. Therefore, if we have a written character for each phoneme of a language, the sum total of characters will range anywhere from fifteen to fifty, and with these characters we shall be able to write down any word of that language.

The existence of phonemes and the identity of each individual phoneme are by no means obvious: it took several generations of study before linguists became fully aware of this important feature of human speech. It is remarkable that long before scientific students of language had made this discovery, there had arisen a system of alphabetic writing,—a system in which each character represented a phoneme. It seems that alphabetic writing developed out of word writing, and that this remarkable development has taken place only once in the history of mankind, —somewhere between 2000 and 1000 B.C. at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, with Egyptians, the Semitic-speaking peoples (such as the Phoenicians), and the Greeks, successively playing the principle role. All forms of alphabetic writing, then, are offshoots of a single original system. The details of this origin, and of the later history, so far as we can get at them, are of great interest, but would carry us too far afield. It is important for us to know that alphabetic writing was not invented at one stroke, as a finished system, but that it grew gradually and, one could almost say, by a series of accidents, out of a system of word writing. Neither then nor at any time since was there any body of experts who understood the system of phonemes and regulated the habits of writing. Among modern nations, some have almost perfect alphabetic systems, such as the Spanish, Bohemian, and Finnish systems of writing, but others have relatively imperfect systems, such as the Italian, Dutch, or German, and still others, have extremely imperfect and arbitrary systems, such as the modern Greek, the French, and the English.

We can illustrate the nature of alphabetic writing by means of English examples, for, in spite of its many imperfections, our system of writing is in origin and in its main features alphabetic. This is proved by the simple fact that we can write all English words by means of only twenty-six characters, whereas a system of word writing would demand many thousands. As an illustration we may take the written representation of the word *pin.* It consists of three characters, and each of these three represents a single phoneme. If anyone told us to use these three characters to represent the word *needle,* we should find the suggestion absurd, because these characters do not *fit the sound* of the word *needle.* That is, each of three characters, *p i n,* is used conventionally to

represent a unit *sound* of our language. This appears plainly if we compare the written symbols for other words, such as *pig, pit* or *bin, din,* or *pan, pun,* or if we reverse the order of the letters and read *nip.*

The alphabetic nature of our writing appears most plainly of all, however, when we put together a combination of letters that does not make a word and yet find ourselves clearly guided to the utterance of English speech-sounds; thus, nobody will have trouble in reading such nonsense-syllables as *nin, nip, lib.*

If our system of writing were perfectly alphabetic, then anyone who knew the value of each letter could read or write any word. In reading, he would simply pronounce the phonemes indicated by the letters, and in writing he would put down the appropriate letter for each phoneme. The fact that we actually can do both of these things in the case of nonsense words, such as *nin* or *nip,* shows that our system of writing is alphabetic.

In order to read alphabetic writing one must have an ingrained habit of producing the sounds of one's language when one sees the written marks which conventionally represent the phonemes. A well-trained reader, of course, for the most part reads silently, but we shall do better for the present to ignore this, especially as we know that the child learns first to read aloud.

The accomplished reader of English, then, has an over-practiced and ingrained habit of uttering one sound of the English language when he sees the letter *p,* another sound when he sees the letter *i,* another when he sees the letter *n,* and so on. In this way, he utters the conventionally accepted word when he sees a combination of letters like *pin, nip, pit, tip,* and, what is more, all readers will agree as to the sounds they utter when they see un-

conventional combinations, such as *pid, nin, pim.* It is this habit which we must set up in the child who is to acquire the art of reading. If we pursue any other course, we are merely delaying him until he acquires this habit in spite of our bad guidance.

English writing is alphabetic, but not perfectly so. For many words we have a conventional rule of writing which does not agree with the sound of the word. Take, for instance, the two words which are pronounced *nit.* One is actually spelled *nit,* but the other is spelled *knit,* with an extra letter *k* at the beginning, a letter which ordinarily represents one of the phonemes of our language.

Now someone may ask whether the spelling of *knit* with *k* does not serve to distinguish this word from *nit* "the egg of a louse." Of course it does, and this is exactly where our writing lapses from the alphabetic principle back into the older scheme of word writing. Alphabetic writing, which indicates all the significant speech-sounds of each word, is just as clear as actual speech, which means that it is clear enough. Word writing, on the other hand, provides a separate character for every word, regardless of its sound, and at the cost of tremendous labor to everyone who learns to read and write. Our spelling the verb *knit* with an extra *k* (and the noun *nit* without this extra *k*) is a step in the direction of word writing. This convention goes a little way toward giving us a special picture for the verb *knit,* as opposed to its homonym, and it does this at the cost of a certain amount of labor, since the reader must learn to ignore initial *k* before *n,* and the writer must learn where to place it and where not to place it. It is none the less important to see that in its basic character our system of writing is alpha-

betic—witness merely the fact that we get along with twenty-six characters instead of twenty-six thousand.

The letters of the alphabet are signs which direct us to produce sounds of our language. A confused and vague appreciation of this fact has given rise to the so-called "phonic" methods of teaching children to read. These methods suffer from several serious faults.

The inventors of these methods confuse writing with speech. They plan the work as though the child were being taught to pronounce—that is, as if the child were being taught to speak. They give advice about phonetics, about clear utterance, and other matters of this sort. This confuses the issue. Alphabetic writing merely directs the reader to produce certain speech-sounds. A person who cannot produce these sounds, cannot get the message of a piece of alphabetic writing. If a child has not learned to utter the speech-sounds of our language, the only sensible course is to postpone reading until he has learned to speak. As a matter of fact, nearly all six-year-old children have long ago learned to speak their native language; they have no need whatever of the drill which is given by phonic methods.

The second error of the phonic methods is that of isolating the speech-sounds. The authors of these methods tell us to show the child a letter, say *t,* and to make him react by uttering the (*t*) sound. This sound is to be uttered either all by itself or else with an obscure vowel sound after it. Now, English-speaking people, children or adults, are not accustomed to make that kind of a noise. The sound (*t*) does not occur alone in English utterance; neither does the sound (*t*) followed by an obscure vowel sound. If we insist on making the child perform unaccustomed feats with his vocal organs, we are bound to confuse his response to the printed signs. In any language, most phonemes do not occur by themselves, in isolated utterance, and even most of the successions of phonemes which one could theoretically devise, are never so uttered. We must not complicate our task by unusual demands on the child's power of pronouncing. To be sure, we intend to apply phonetics to our reading instruction, but this does not mean that we are going to try to teach phonetics to young children. In the absurdity of trying this we see the greatest fault of the so-called phonic methods.

In spite of the special methods, such as the "phonic" method, which have been advocated at various times, the actual instruction in our schools consists almost entirely of something much simpler, which we may call the *word-method.* The word-method teaches the child to utter a word when he sees the printed symbols for this word; it does not pretend to any phonetic breaking-up of the word. The child learns the printed symbols, to be sure, by "spelling" the word,—that is by naming, in proper succession, the letters which make up the written representation of the word, as *see-aye-tee*: *cat,* and so on. No attempt is made, however, to take advantage of the alphabetic principle. If one examines the primers and first readers which exemplify the various methods that have been advocated, one is struck by the fact that the differences are very slight: the great bulk of the work is word-learning. The authors are so saturated with this, the conventional method, that they carry their innovations only a very short way; they evidently lack the linguistic knowledge that would enable them to grade the matter according to relations between sound and spelling. It is safe to say that nearly all of us were taught to read by the word-method.

The word-method proceeds as though our writing were word-writing. Every word has to be learned as an arbitrary unit; this task is simplified only by the fact that all these word-characters are made up out of twenty-six constituent units, the letters. In order to read a new word, the child must learn the new word-character; he can best do this by memorizing the letters which make up this new word-character, but these letters are arbitrarily presented and have nothing to do with the sound of the word.

The most serious drawback of all the English reading instruction known to me, regardless of the special method that is in each case advocated, is the drawback of the word-method. The written forms for words are presented to the child in an order which conceals the alphabetic principle. For instance, if near the beginning of instruction, we present the words *get* and *gem,* we cannot expect the child to develop any fixed and fluent response to the sight of the letter *g.* If we talk to him about the "hard" and "soft" sounds of the letter *g,* we shall only confuse him the more. The irregularities of our spelling—that is, its deviations from the alphabetic principle—demand careful handling if they are not to confuse the child and to delay his acquisition of the alphabetic habit.

Our teaching ought to distinguish, then, between *regular* spellings, which involve only the alphabetic principle, and *irregular* spellings, which depart from this principle, and it ought to classify the irregular spellings according to the various types of deviation from the alphabetic principle. We must train the child to respond vocally to the sight of letters, and this can be done by presenting regular spellings; we must train him, also, to make exceptional vocal responses to irregular spellings, and this can be done by presenting systematically the various types of irregular spelling. For instance, we must train the child to respond by the *k*-sound to the sight of the letter *k* in words like *kiss, kid, kin, kit,* but we must also train him not to try pronouncing a *k*-sound when he sees the written *k* in the words like *knit, knife, knee, knight.*

The knowledge required to make this classification is not very profound. Although this knowledge is easily gained, persons who lack it are likely to make troublesome mistakes. The author of a text-book and the classroom teacher does not need a profound knowledge of phonetics; he needs only to realize that information on this subject is available and that he need not grope about in the dark.

(To be continued)

Remedial Reading Materials

GEORGE SPACHE
Psychologist, Friends Seminary, and Brooklyn Friends School
New York City

RUTH C. POLLACK
Graduate Student, School of Education,
New York University

BY MEANS of a questionnaire, we have attempted to assemble a list of the remedial reading materials in common use with elementary school pupils. Inquiries were addressed to 92 reading clinics in colleges and universities, and to 33 child guidance and psychiatric clinics. Detailed responses concerning materials were received from 35 sources and form the basis of this compilation.

Despite the fact that our respondents are scattered through 16 states and are active in varied clinical situations, the compiled list does not include a number of texts and workbooks offered by American publishers for use in remedial reading. Therefore, our list cannot be considered a complete list of available materials. It is indicative, however, of the particular remedial materials which reading and child guidance clinics have found serviceable in elementary schools.

The list of remedial reading materials offered for the elementary school includes, of course, items that are usable with retarded readers of primary, elementary and junior high school placement. Starred items are those mentioned by more than ten per cent of the respondents. The reading levels at which the materials are most frequently used are also noted.

REMEDIAL READING MATERIALS FOR THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Aldredge and McKee, *My Work Book in Reading*. Harter. (Primary)

American Council on Education, *Achievements of Civilization*. American Council on Education. (Intermediate and upper)

*American Education Press, *Diagnostic Reading Workbooks*. American Education Press. (Primary-intermediate)

*American Education Press, *Unit Study Books*. American Education Press. (Primary-intermediate)

American Optical Company, *Reading Rolls for Metronoscope*. American Optical Co. (Primary through upper)

Augsburg Publishers, *Read O Reading Series*. Augsburg Publishers. (Primary)

Baker and Reed, *Curriculum Readers*. Bobbs-Merrill Co. (Primary)

Baker and Thorndike, *Everyday Classics*. Macmillan. (Primary-intermediate)

*Brueckner and Lewis, *Diagnostic Tests and Remedial Exercises*, Winston. (Primary-intermediate)

*Buckingham, *Children's Bookshelf*. Ginn. (Primary through upper)

Charters, *Democracy Readers*. Macmillan. (Primary-intermediate)

Charters, Smiley and Strang, *Health and Growth Series*. Macmillan. (Primary)

Cordts, *New Path to Reading*. Ginn. (Primary through upper)

Courtis, Smith, *Picture Story Reading Lessons, Series I*. World Book Co. (Primary)

Dolch, *New Type Picture Word Cards*. Garrard Press. (Primary)

*Dolch, *Basic Sight Word Cards*. Garrard Press. (Primary)

Dopp, Pitts and Garrison, *Happy Road to Reading*. Rand McNally. (Primary through upper)

Durrell and Sullivan, *Building Word Power*. World Book Co. (Preprimary)

*Elson-Gray, *Elson-Gray Basic Readers*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary-intermediate)

Follet Publishing Co., *Follett Picture Stories*. Follett. (Intermediate)

*Gates and Ayer, *Work Play Books*. Macmillan. (Primary-intermediate)

Gates, Baker, Peardon, *Good Companion Series*. Macmillan. (Primary)

* Mentioned by more than ten per cent of respondents.

*Gates, A. I. et. alii., *New Work Play Readers*. Macmillan. (Primary)

*Gates, A. I. and Peardon, *Practice Exercises in Reading*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia. (Intermediate)

Gibbons and Cook, *We Read, Write, Speak, and Spell*. Educational Test Bureau. (Primary)

Ginn and Co., *Beacon Phonetics*. Ginn. (Primary)

Grady, Gifford, Klapper, *Childhood Readers*. Scribners. (Primary)

*Gray, *Curriculum Foundation Basic Readers*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary through upper)

Gray, *Curriculum Foundation Number Stories*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary through upper)

Gray, *Curriculum Foundation Science Stories*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary through upper)

*Hahn, *Child Development Readers*. Houghton Mifflin. (Primary-intermediate)

E. M. Hale and Co., *Picture Scripts*. E. M. Hale and Co. (Primary-intermediate)

Harter, *Alphabet Flash Cards*. Harter. (Primary)

Harter, *Harter Vocabulary Building*. Harter. (Primary)

D. C. Heath, *New World Neighbors*. D. C. Heath. (Intermediate)

D. C. Heath and Co., *Walt Disney Story Books*. D. C. Health. (Primary-intermediate)

Hegge-Kirk, *Remedial Reading Drills*. George Wahr. (Primary-intermediate)

Hertz, *Forty Famous Stories*. Hall McCreary. (Intermediate)

Hertz, *Four and Twenty Famous Tales*. Hall McCreary. (Intermediate)

Hertz, *Heroes of Health*. Hall McCreary. (Intermediate)

Hertz, *Washington to Lindberg*. Hall McCreary. (Intermediate)

Hildreth, *Easy Growth to Reading*. Winston. (Primary through upper)

Horn-Shields, *Horn-Shields Silent Reading Flash Cards*. Ginn. (Primary)

House, R., *Skills Drills Program*. Silver Burdett. (Primary-intermediate)

Hovious, Carol, *Flying the Printways*. D. C. Heath. (Intermediate)

Hovious, Carol, *Following Printed Trails*, D. C. Heath. (Intermediate-upper)

Johnson, G., *My Weekly Readers*. American Education Press. (Primary-intermediate)

Johnson and Kell, *Modern Living*. American Education Press. (Upper)

Johnson and Kell, *Scottie and His Friends*. American Education Press. (Primary)

Jordan, *Childs Word Book*. Scribners. (Primary-intermediate)

*Jordan et alii, *Lorna Doone*. Scott, Foresman. (Intermediate)

Leavell, et alii, *Friendly Hour Readers*. American Book. (Primary)

Macmillan, *Happy Hour Books*. Macmillan. (Primary)

McCall and Crabb, *Standard Test Lessons*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia. (Primary through upper)

Milton Bradley, *Embeco Phonetic Drill Cards Series A*. Milton Bradley. (Primary)

Moderow, et alii., *Six Great Stories*. Scott, Foresman. (Intermediate-upper)

Moderow, *When Washington Danced*. Scott, Foresman. (Intermediate-upper)

Neal and Foster, *Study Period Exercises for Developing Reading Skills*. Laidlaw. (Intermediate)

Nida, *Story of Man Series*. Laidlaw. (Primary-intermediate)

O'Brien-Gray, *Cathedral Basic Reader*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary-intermediate)

*O'Donnell and Carey, *Alice and Jerry Reading Series*. Row, Peterson. (Primary-intermediate)

Parker, Bertha, *The Basic Science Education Series*. Row, Peterson. (Intermediate)

Parley, B. M., *Fishes*. Harper. (Intermediate)

Parley, B. M., *Seeds*. Harper. (Intermediate)

Patch and Howe, *Nature and Science Readers*. Macmillan. (Primary-intermediate)

Pennell and Cusack, *Children's Own Readers*. Ginn. (Primary-intermediate)

Science Digest Inc., *Science Digest*. Science Digest Inc. (Upper)

Scott-Foresman, *Boxcar Children*. Scott, Foresman. (Primary-intermediate)

Sisters Notre Dame, *New American Readers for Catholic Schools*. D. C. Heath. (Primary through upper)

Smith, N. B., *Unit-Activity Readers*. Silver Burdett. (Primary through upper)

Stacy-Barnes, *Phonetic Word Drill Cards*. Harter. (Primary)

Steck Co., *Elementary Science Workbooks*. Steck Co. (Primary through upper)

*Stone, Clarence, *Eye and Ear Fun*. Webster. (Primary)

Stone, *Webster Readers*. Webster. (Primary-intermediate)

Strang, Ruth, *Here and There and Home.* Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia. (Upper)

Strang, Ruth, *Seven Days at Sea.* Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia. (Upper)

Thorndike, E. L., *Thorndike Library.* D. Appleton-Century. (Intermediate through upper)

Walker, Parkman, and Summy, *Study Readers.* Merrill. (Primary-intermediate)

*Watters and Courtis, *Picture Dictionary for Children.* Grosset and Dunlap. (Primary-intermediate)

West, *Supplementary Readers.* Longmans, Green. (Primary-intermediate)

White and Hanthorn, *Do and Learn Readers.* American Book Co. (Primary)

Wickey and Lambader, *Goals in Spelling.* Webster. (Primary through upper)

*Wilkinson and Brown, *Improving Your Reading.* Noble and Noble. (Intermediate-upper)

Yoakam, *Laidlaw Basic Reader.* Laidlaw. (Primary-intermediate)

Yoakam and others, *Reading to Learn,* (Books 1, 2, 3). Macmillan. (Intermediate-upper)

A STUDY OF READING GROWTHS IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

third years. Furthermore it shows that growths in beginning reading are by way of capacity areas. Slow children remain in a low capacity area for a considerable length of time regardless of methods and materials used.

On the basis of this experience we advance the hypothesis that if during the first year and a half of school a child experiences too much difficulty in reading, he should not be given daily reading instruction. We believe it can be delayed without detriment to the child's reading progress. The time of beginning daily reading instruction will be determined by the teacher who will have the child in a reading readiness environment and also give him frequent opportunities to read. The criteria for beginning reading instruction will consist primarily of his power of retaining words and his interest in reading. At the present time we are not in a position even to suggest the degree of power or interest necessary before daily reading instruction is begun. We are strongly inclined to believe that whatever formula may be devised must be based upon the very complex physical and social pattern of an individual and not upon a single index. Reading is only one phase of a total growth, and no action in its behalf should jeopardize other important values. Thus, the insistence of a parent on a child's being taught reading, or the child's dislike of reading, are factors which should be recognized by the reading readiness formula. Furthermore, we are strongly inclined to believe that the most fruitful search for this formula for reading readiness will be made through a rather exhaustive study of various individual cases.

Reading Readiness in the Intermediate Grades

JESS S. HUDSON

Principal, Sidney Lanier School
Tulsa, Oklahoma

IN RELATIVELY recent years the concept of reading readiness has been expanded to include the idea of readiness at all stages of reading development, since it is obvious that differences in pupil experience and maturation persist through all grades. In considering reading at the intermediate grade level, one may define two types of readiness: first, a general readiness in terms of the maturity or the general level of development which the child has attained, and second, specific readiness for reading a particular selection, which does not necessarily depend upon the maturity of the child.

The concept of general readiness for reading at the intermediate grade level involves essentially the same considerations as that of reading readiness at the primary level. Many of the factors of readiness for reading in the first grade listed by Lucile Harrison and other investigators continue to be important in the intermediate grades. Since reading is a thought process set in motion by the recognition of printed symbols, the mental development of the child must be advanced to the point that he not only can recognize the symbols but also understand the ideas, see their relationships, reflect on their significance and mentally react to them. The very young child may be able to engage in the thought processes necessary for the satisfactory reading of a simple factual selection or a story with a simple plot. The child who is mentally only seven or eight years of age, regardless of his chronological age

or school classification, can hardly be expected to comprehend historical continuity. Neither can we expect the average fourth or fifth grade child to understand the relationships involved in an abstract problem of algebra or calculus. The same is true in connection with any reading which involves the so-called higher thought processes. Readiness for reading the materials of a fourth grade curriculum assumes a mental age not of six years or seven years but of approximately nine years. Likewise, the factors of social development and general experiential background are pertinent to readiness for reading in the intermediate grades. The average sixth grade child does not have the social understandings necessary for comprehending and interpreting Jefferson's "Political Toleration" or Addison's "Discontent—An Allegory" which may be found in the sixth reader of a famous early series. The factor of emotional development appears to have as important a place in readiness for later reading as it does in readiness for reading at the primary level. Varying degrees of emotional development are required for an interpretation of much of the fine literature that portrays such emotional feelings as love, devotion, and righteous indignation. The reader must have lived long enough to experience and identify in his own life such feeling as contempt, compassion, and disdain before expressions of these feelings in literature can be interpreted. Finally, general readiness for reading at any higher level presupposes the development of certain reading skills such as

those involved in the mechanics of reading, independent recognition of words, a relatively large meaning vocabulary and speed suited to the reader's purpose. Lee[1] has found that a reading level of 4.0 is necessary for achievement in the content subjects in the middle grades and Gray[2] suggests a reading level of 7.0 as desirable for achievement in reading in the junior high school.

Most teachers recognize these factors of general readiness for reading and attempt to make provision for them through grade classification of the children or through suitable adjustment of the curriculum materials to the general level of development of the children. While there is yet much to be desired in actual practice in adequately adjusting the child and his reading curriculum, it is not the purpose of this article to deal further with this problem of general readiness.

Granting a favorable adjustment of the curriculum to the general mental, social, and emotional development of the child, one cannot assume that readiness for the proper interpretation of a reading selection is present.

The factors involved in a specific readiness for reading and interpreting a particular selection are more subtle than those of general readiness, and in actual classroom practice they are too frequently completely ignored. The writer, in visiting hundreds of intermediate grade classrooms, has observed the rather common practice of assigning a selection in a reader, a geography, or history text book with little or no discussion or preparation which will help the pupils to interpret that which they are to read. Even in the

more progressive class rooms where a type of unit teaching is in evidence, the stage is often as poorly set. Frequently, only the teacher recognizes the relation of the assigned selection to the unit problem or to the general purpose for the reading. Contact between the pupil's previous experiences and the content of the selection have not been made. Interest is completely lacking. Concepts and understanding essential to comprehension and proper interpretation are not established. Purposes for reading are not clear nor have specific reading problems been set. The results of the reading which follow an assignment of this sort are disappointingly poor.

The first of the factors in developing a readiness for adequate comprehension and interpretation of a specific assignment is motivation, and the most powerful motivating force is that of interest. As repeatedly pointed out by psychologists, one of the most frequent causes of failure in comprehension is lack of attention and usually lack of attention is due to lack of interest. The experiences of a lapse of attention as we read, due to failure of interest, is familiar to all of us. Interest in reading is best cared for by assignments which grow out of "pupil interests." However, we may be easily mislead in the class room in the matter of pupil interest. All pupils in the class may not share these so-called "pupil interests." Too frequently, the interest of certain pupils is imposed upon all members of the class. In the second place, pupil interest in a general problem does not always insure interest in all phases of the problem. Therefore, the teacher must insure interest before the reading takes place. This may be done through discussion which will set up points of contact between the selections and the pupils' previous experiences; through discussion

1 Lee, Dorris May, *The Importance of Reading for Achieving in Grades Four, Five, and Six*. Contributions to Education 556. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933.

2 Gray, Wm. S. "The Nature and Organization of Basic Instruction in Reading," *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*, p. 75. Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Public School Publishing Co., 1937.

which will establish the relationship between the selection to be read and the problem under consideration; through an overview of the selection which will set up an anticipation of interesting facts or funny events; through the showing of objects and pictures which have a bearing on the content; through relating of personal experiences which have some bearing on or similarity to the experiences of the selection; and through the telling of stories similar in nature to the one to be read.

Accurate communication cannot take place between the author and the reader unless there is a similarity of past experiences, and as a result, a similarity of associations which the author and the reader make with the words used in the selection. Walpole[3] suggests ten different meanings for the word "body." Unless the reader can make the same associations with the word "body" that the author has made in using the word, accurate comprehension and correct interpretation will not be possible. This matching of associations of the writer and reader is the second factor in readiness for reading a specific selection. In some instances the child's concept of a particular word or phrase as used by the author will be completely lacking. In other cases the concept will be hazy or inadequate. The same thing applies to ideas that are expressed. Therefore, to insure correct interpretation, the teacher must assist the child in developing the proper concepts of the more difficult words and ideas. This she may do through explanation and discussion of the words or ideas; through comparing or contrasting; through the use of pictures, objects, maps, and graphs; and through the use of the dictionary. Often

the child may be able to make the correct associations for a particular word but cannot recognize the printed symbol. The problem then is the development of the recognition of the word through a pronunciation exercise.

Another important factor in readiness for interpretation has been described by W. Wilbur Hatfield[4] as the matching of the pupils' mental "set" with the author's. Two factors are involved: the matching of moods and the matching of purposes. Hatfield cites the example of many children's dislike for *Alice in Wonderland* because it seems silly. When the reading of this story is preceded by a discussion of foolish dreams and then the presentation of *Alice in Wonderland* is made as another foolish dream, the problem of dislike disappears. Those of us who have had the experience of a few minutes of difficulty in readjusting ourselves for the proper interpretation of a serious feature picture after viewing a hilarious comedy understand the importance of mood.

The matching of the pupil's purpose in reading with the author's purpose is an equally important factor. Without an understanding of the author's purpose, meaning may easily be read into a selection that the author never intended. For example, we often prefer to discuss a problem with a friend rather than to write for fear of being misunderstood as to purpose. It is the teacher's responsibility to establish the right purposes in the minds of the pupils through the setting of a definite reading problem. These purposes should be consistent not only with the author's purpose but also with the general theme or problem of the unit under consideration.

The writer with a group of intermedi-

3 Walpole, Hugh, "Interpretative Exercises for the Middle Grades," *Reading and Pupil Development*, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 51. University of Chicago, 1940.

4 Hatfield, W. Wilbur, "Relation of the Broader Context to Interpretation," *Reading and Pupil Development*, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 57. University of Chicago, 1940.

ate grade teachers set up the following outline as a guide for developing a readiness on the part of pupils for correct interpretation of a specific reading selection.

I. The general approach to the reading:
   A. Was an interest in and a challenge for reading the selection developed
      1. Through general discussion related to the content which will set up an anticipation of interesting or useful facts?
      2. Through the relating of personal experiences which have a bearing on the selection?
      3. Through showing of pictures, objects, maps and graphs?
      4. Through establishing points of contact between the content of the selection and pupils' previous experiences?
      5. Through establishing the relationship of the selection to the unit or the problem under consideration, thereby causing the pupils to see why the selection should be read?
      6. Through establishing the relationship of the selection to the pupils' recognized purpose for reading?
   B. Was the mood of the pupils matched with the author's
      1. Through an understanding of the background of the selection?
      2. Through an understanding of the temper of the time in which the story had its setting?
      3. Through an understanding of the author's purpose in writing?
      4. Through the development of an expectation of what is to be found in the selection?

II. Setting the reading problem:
   A. Were the purposes for reading the the selection clearly established in the pupils' minds?
   B. Were the purposes consistent with the author's purpose?
   C. Were the purposes consistent with the general theme or problem under consideration?
   D. Were the purposes consistent with both content and skill objectives which the teacher had in mind?
   E. Were the purposes expressed in terms of a definite reading program?

III. Development of meanings essential to accurate comprehension and correct interpretation:
   A. Were pronunciations of key words developed?
   B. Were the meanings of key words adequately developed through explanation, discussion, and comparison or contrast? Through showing of pictures, objects, maps, or graphs? Through the use of the dictionary?
   C. Were essential understandings of key phrases, sentences, and ideas developed through explanation, discussion, comparison or contrast, or through relation to recognized experiences?

The foregoing list is applicable in its entirety to any assignment which involves work-type or study reading. Teachers may use it as a series of steps in assigning the reading. The second major item, "setting the reading problem," would probably be omitted in reading for enjoyment.

The list of items in this guide may seem formidable. This is due, however, to the multiplicity of means which are suggested, rather than to the essential factors of readiness which are involved. The teacher in using the list as a guide will give due regard to each factor of readiness but will use only those means for establishing each factor which appear to be useful in each particular case.

Activities For Teaching Study Skills

NATHAN A. MILLER
Remedial Reading Teacher, O'Keefe Junior High School
Atlanta, Georgia

STUDY SKILLS or work-study reading must be considered not as a separate entity but as an interrelated part of the child's whole reading ability. There is danger in the attempt to dissect reading ability into discrete parts. Certainly, however, comprehension and rate are basic in all types of reading.

Therefore the diagnosis preliminary to teaching study skills must be done with the idea of fitting study skills into the entire reading difficulties pattern. This conception of diagnosis requires individual remedial treatment or teaching of groups with similar difficulties. In the search for what is wrong and the remedy, keep in mind that the content subjects often require the teaching of definite techniques of reading in that subject. Reading teachers must be cognizant of this principle and their teaching will be modified in accordance with what subject-teachers do about teaching reading techniques in that subject. For example, the teaching of certain procedures and skills in reading and interpreting arithmetic problems facilitates — no, it is almost a *sine qua non* of effective work in problem solving.

The best exercise books for teaching techniques in a particular content subject are the textbooks and study books in that subject. Make the conditions of learning as realistic as possible. Utilize actual study situations in the life of the child. Begin the remedial work on this present problem in studying. Keep the child alert to the purpose in each reading situation.

The writer has found it helpful in work-study reading to divide the study skills, for convenience in teaching, as follows:

1. Locating and classifying materials and selecting data that bear on a problem
2. Reading
   a. To note details or get facts
   b. To get the main idea or ideas, central thought or thoughts
   c. To follow a sequence of events
   d. To follow directions
   e. To see the relationship of cause-effect
3. Comprehending and/or understanding what is read
4. Evaluating, appraising, and/or associating what is read
5. Organizing and synthesizing
6. Applying, remembering, and/or storing for future use
7. Adapting reading skills to types of reading materials
8. Using of dictionaries and reference materials

To develop these skills a variety of experiences is needed. In the following summary of activities, some possible skills exercised by each are indicated in parentheses by a code corresponding to the division of skills made above. No claim of completeness is made for the list of activities nor for the skills possibly developed by each. For brevity's sake no activities relating directly to the use of dictionaries and reference materials have been listed.

1. Find answers to thought questions (1, 2-a-b-e, 3, 5, 6)
2. Find answers to fact questions (2-a, 3, 6)
3. Reproduce the thought of a selection orally or in writing (3, 2-a-b-c-e, 5, 6)

4. Build or make something from printed directions (1, 3, 2-d)
5. Dramatize a selection (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
6. Check the accuracy of statements and answers (3, 4)
7. Illustrate by story, experience, drawing, map, graphs, or picture the author's meaning in what has been read (3, 2, 4, 5, 6, 1)
8. Analyze a problem into its component parts (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
9. Collect information to aid in the solving of a class or individual problem (1, 2-a-b-c-d, 3, 4, 5, 7)
10. Make a summary (2-a-b-c-e, 3, 4, 5, 6)
11. Outline a selection or fill in a partially complete outline (1, 2-a-b-c-e, 4, 5, 6)
12. Determine and evaluate a number of materials as they relate to a particular problem or purpose (1, 2-b, 3, 4, 5)
13. Organize material or data from several sources by working out a problem, giving a talk or report (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)
14. From a list of synonyms or definitions select the one that fits the context (3, 2, 8)
15. Compare or contrast one selection with another (4, 6, 2-b-c-e)
16. Make out questions for the other members of the class to answer (4, 3, 5, 6, 2)
17. Select parts which show or support the author's point of view (4, 5, 6, 1)
18. Verify or check the accuracy and suitability of headings in newspapers and textbooks (2-b, 4, 2-a-c-e, 3, 5)
19. Discuss and decide whether statements are true or false (4, 1, 2-e, 3, 5)
20. Find where given parts of a selection are found (1, 2-b-d)
21. Match paragraph headings with the appropriate paragraph (2-b, 3, 5)
22. In a list of topics, separate into major and minor topics or ideas (5, 2-a-b, 3, 4)
23. Compose headlines and topic sentences (2-b, 3, 4, 5)
24. Make an idea line or modified outline (2-b-a, 3, 4, 5, 6)
25. Given an idea line make an oral or written summary (2-b-a-e, 3, 4, 5, 6)
26. Sort cut-up articles into the three or four original articles (1, 2-b-e, 3, 5)
27. Locate information from the table of contents or index (1, 2-b, 4)

28. Classify newspaper clippings as to section of paper: sports, financial, society, editorial (1, 2-b, 3, 4, 5)
29. Classify clippings with reference to their bearing on a given problem (1, 2-b-a-e, 3, 4)
30. Work to enrich the imagery and creative imagination in reading (3, 4)
31. Associate reading with other experiences (4, 5, 3)
32. Draw generalizations (5, 4, 3)
33. Find exceptions to the author's point of view (4, 3, 5, 6)
34. Ask student to suggest as result of his reading new activities or topics for further study (4, 3)
35. In interpreting author's meaning note difference of sense and non-sense (3, 4, 2-a)
36. Note similarities between selections (4, 2-a-b, 5)
37. Note difference in selections (4, 2-a-b, 5)
38. Note relations between past and present (4, 6, 2-a-b)
39. Make suggestions for improving a selection (4, 2-a-b-e)
40. Given list of events, arrange them in order of sequence in story (4, 5, 6, 2-a-b-c)
41. Given list of ideas, arrange them in developmental sequence (5, 4, 6, 3, 2-c-a-b)
42. Finish an unfinished story (1, 2-c-b-e, 3, 4, 5, 6)
43. Read part of a selection and then ask: "What comes next?" (2-c, 1, 2-b-e, 3, 4, 5, 6)
44. Read a set of directions and then test mastery by questioning (2-d, 3, 6)
45. Ask questions beginning with *Why* (2-e, 4, 5, 6, 2-a-b-c, 1, 3)
46. Interpret diagrams, maps, graphs, drawings (3, 2-a-b-e)
47. Interpret figurative language (3)
48. Interpret satire and irony (3)
49. Relate and connect the author with the What and the Way he writes (4, 2-e)
50. Take running notes (2-a-b-e, 6)
51. Anticipate content of selection or chapter (1, 2-b, 4, 3)
52. Pick out key sentences in paragraphs (2-b, 3)
53. Directed study of assignment (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8).

A Principal Looks at Primers

HAROLD C. DENT

Principal, Morris Grade School
Argentine, Kansas

READERS IN THE primary grades should be selected with special care because it is in these grades that the foundation is laid for future reading. As Uhl says, "By the beginning of the fourth grade pupils should have the ability to read unfamiliar materials with relatively little dependence on the numerous adjuncts required by beginners."[1]

There is a difference between basal readers and supplementary readers. The latter should supply an abundance of related material with a vocabulary similar to that of the basic reader, in order that the reading difficulty will be minimized. This should help care for individual differences, especially in poor readers. The better readers can master other materials as their ability grows. By increasing the amount and range of reading, the child in the primary grades gets a sense of mastery.

From the criteria set up by various authorities, the following items should be considered in choosing readers for the primary grades:[2]

1. Interesting, desirable, familiar content on child's level and within his grasp.
2. Vocabulary load.
3. Illustrations.
4. Other physical qualities of the book.
5. Teacher's manuals.
6. Balance among worktype, literary, and science materials.
7. Recency of publication.
8. Duplications of material already in use.
9. Contribution to the school's social studies program.
10. Pupil aids, such as workbooks.

[1] Uhl, W. L., "The Materials of Reading," *National Society for the Study of Education*, Thirty-sixth Yearbook, Part I, Public School Publishing Co., 1937. P. 209.
[2] McKee, Paul, *Reading and Literature in the Elementary School*, Houghton-Mifflin, 1934. P. 175-79.
Michaelis, John, *An Evaluation of Basal Primary Reading Textbooks*, (Master's Thesis) Denver University, 1940. P. 10-13.
Hockett, John A., "A Comparative Analysis of the Vocabularies of Twenty-nine Second Readers," *Journal of Educational Research*, May, 1938, 31:665-671.

Two of the criteria necessary for supplementary books have been studied preparatory to making this report. While these criteria are not the only ones to be considered, there is no question but that each is of basic importance. These criteria deal with similarity of content and vocabulary. Vocabularies have been rather thoroughly studied in the past, but content has not come in for its share of importance. With the present stress on individual differences it is being more carefully considered.

Similarity of Content

In the first study the books were divided into the number of pages of similar material. The division of this material was on the basis of types of subject matter found in most textbooks.

The criterion of subject-matter has a number of possible uses of which the following seem to be the most important:

1. As a basis for reading units.
2. Materials similar to others previously used.
3. Materials different from those already used.
4. To locate a child's interest and to select topics for remedial reading.

Those who are working out teaching units to be based on certain subjects are obliged to find, in a minimum amount of time, books containing desired materials. The following tables list materials found in recent readers under a number of headings.

It is often desirable to find additional material on a certain subject. For instance, if a group is studying Indians all like material might well prove of value to the children.

On the other hand teachers may feel

dissatisfied with a given text book that deals only with a limited number of topics. They may desire material of an entirely different nature. Rural children may be reading almost wholly about city happenings with which they are not familiar. The following tables give a clue as to where unlike materials may be found.

In remedial cases it is agreed that the work must grow out of the child's interests. Harris says, "One of the best ways to build up a desire to read is to get a child to realize the enjoyment that can be gained in reading interesting books and stories.[3] There is a decided trend toward utilizing the interests of children and to build from there; we must take the child from where we find him. Very often, in remedial cases, it is necessary to have material on a certain subject presented very simply so that the child can read the text without too much difficulty. The following tables suggest several interests upon which teachers may capitalize.

[3] Harris, Albert J., *How to Increase Reading Ability,* Longmans, Green, 1940. P. 209.

TABLE I
Number of Pages in Each Book Dealing with Various Subjects
PRIMERS

	Animals and circus	City and city helpers	Travels	Fancy	Farm	Holidays and special days	Other items	Total pages
1. Bobbs-Merrill "Friends for Every Day"	42	44	41	16	4	19	—	166
2. Row-Peterson "Day In and Day Out"	64	9	18	28	—	—	32	151
3. Lyons and Carnahan "Bob and Judy"	55	—	18	16	—	—	61	150
4. Winston "At Play"	20	—	14	25	21	13	28	121
5. Macmillan (Work-Play) "Jim and Judy"	2	9	43	20	23	42	11	150
6. Scott-Foresman "Fun with Dick and Jane"	26	—	11	—	46	6	63	152
7. Silver-Burdett "At Home and Away"	19	25	29	6	25	—	33	137
8. Allyn and Bacon "Day by Day"	65	6	—	—	9	—	65	145
9. Laidlaw "Primer" (basic)	74	—	—	—	5	1	44	124
10. Houghton Mifflin "Reading for Fun"	6	46	6	35	20	—	36	149
11. Bobbs-Merrill "The Pet Pony"	85	11	—	—	27	10	32	155
12. Lippincott "David and Joan"	23	26	—	23	—	16	31	165
13. Johnson "Jo-Boy"	38	14	11	6	16	14	21	120
14. Macmillan "School Friends"	—	—	—	—	—	—	80	80
15. Ginn and Co. "We Live on a Farm"	35	—	—	—	78	23	—	136
16. American Book Co. "Happy Times"	14	21	12	—	—	—	79	126
17. Webster "Joyful Stories"	37	8	23	23	—	11	47	149
18. University Publishing Co. "To School and Home Again"	55	—	5	13	—	16	34	123

TABLE II

Number of Pages in Each Book Dealing with Various Subjects
FIRST READERS

	Animals, birds circus, zoo	City and city helpers	Out-of-doors, weather, etc.	Infancy	On the farm	Travels	Holidays and special days	Other items	Total pages
1. Bobbs-Merrill "Friends in Town and Country"	47	32	17	29	18	38	16	—	197
2. Row-Peterson "Round About"	56	26	36	19	3	25	7	27	199
3. Lyons and Carnahan "Good Times Together"	23	39	31	—	17	25	10	3	148
4. Winston "I Know a Secret"	40	3	15	32	—	9	17	35	151
5. Macmillan (Work-Play) "Down Our Street"	34	38	8	73	19	14	—	10	196
6. Scott-Foresman "Our New Friends"	52	48	41	26	5	—	9	4	185
7. Silver-Burdett "In City and Country"	39	47	—	23	36	16	—	7	168
8. Allyn and Bacon "To and Fro"	13	—	1	62	69	30	—	10	185
9. Laidlaw "Book One" (basic)	32	—	12	56	—	—	—	21	121
10. Houghton Mifflin "Finding Friends"	66	3	49	15	—	64	—	—	197
11. Bobbs-Merrill "Fifty Flags and Other Stories"	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	--	—
12. Lippincott "City and Country"	21	16	25	41	19	10	—	17	149
13. Johnson "Good Friends"	37	10	43	24	20	4	19	11	168
14. Macmillan "Let's Take Turns"	—	—	68	—	—	—	—	50	118
15. Ginn and Co. "We Live in A City"	100	56	—	—	—	7	5	—	168
16. American Book Co. "In Storm and Sunshine"	18	29	47	7	—	—	20	20	141
17. Webster "What Fun"	47	1	42	41	—	3	7	26	167
18. University Publishing Co. "In the City and On the Farm"	32	36	6	—	42	—	—	7	123

TABLE III

Number of Pages in Each Book Dealing with Various Subjects

SECOND READERS

	Outdoors, seasons, etc.	Animals, birds and circus	Traveling	Fancy	Farm	City and city helpers	Indians	Special days	Other items	Total pages
1. Bobbs-Merrill "Friends Here and Away"	20	77	2	26	48	43	32	27	—	275
2. Row-Peterson "Friendly Village"	86	28	2	—	32	15	28	—	52	242
3. Lyons and Carnahan "Friends About Us"	20	46	33	—	14	68	26	—	34	241
4. Winston "Along the Way"	—	13	14	83	—	21	16	26	8	181
5. Macmillan (Work-Play) "We Grow Up"	24	77	—	40	24	38	38	—	—	241
6. Scott-Foresman "Friends and Neighbors"	21	41	8	89	—	50	—	24	—	233
7. Silver-Burdett "Round About You"	6	45	30	20	7	14	—	22	88	232
8. Allyn and Bacon "Faces and Places"	—	27	44	34	57	30	9	—	42	243
9. Laidlaw "Book Two" (basic)	51	64	4	102	3	—	6	—	15	245
10. Houghton Mifflin "Making Visits"	86	41	10	—	19	62	48	6	24	296
11. Bobbs-Merrill "The Sailing Tub"	44	128	—	—	10	29	—	24	35	270
12. Lippincott "All Year Round"	3	62	—	14	—	30	—	—	71	180
13. Johnson "Wheels and Wings"	13	43	28	68	18	20	—	34	5	229
14. Macmillan "Enjoying Our Land"	20	—	123	—	—	—	—	10	27	180
15. Ginn and Co. "Making New Friends"	22	101	42	—	—	20	10	—	22	217
16. American Book Co. "In Town and Country"	51	22	12	50	—	30	—	12	26	203
17. Webster "Joyful Trails"	72	31	42	39	—	15	16	7	23	245

TABLE IV

VOCABULARIES — PRIMERS.

Comparison of Vocabularies of Various Primers with "Friends for Every Day"

	Number of different words in the book	In common with the basic book		Words not in basic book	Words in basic books but not found here.
		Number	Percent		
1. Bobbs-Merrill "Friends for Every Day"	197	197	100%	—	—
2. Row-Peterson "Day In and Day Out"	219	97	44%	122	100
3. Lyons and Carnahan "Bob and Judy"	232	94	41%	138	103
4. Winston "At Play"	156	88	56%	68	109
5. Macmillan (Work-Play) "Jim and Judy"	188	85	45%	103	112
6. Scott-Foresman "Fun with Dick and Jane"	158	83	53%	75	114
7. Silver-Burdett "At Home and Away"	245	96	39%	149	101
8. Allyn and Bacon "Day by Day"	234	89	38%	145	108
9. Laidlaw "Primer" (basic)	232	87	38%	145	110
10. Houghton Mifflin "Reading for Fun"	239	93	39%	146	104
11. Bobbs-Merrill "The Pet Pony"	311	118	38%	193	79
12. Lippincott "David and Joan"	278	107	38%	171	90
13. Johnson "Jo-Boy"	200	97	49%	103	100
14. Macmillan "School Friends" *	—	—	—	--	—
15. Ginn and Co. "We Live on a Farm"**	230	89	39%	141	108
16. American Book Co. "Happy Times"	173	86	50%	87	111
17. Webster "Joyful Stories"	221	99	45%	122	98
18. University Publishing Co. "To School and Home Again"	198	79	40%	119	118

*No adequate list given.

**Includes all words in Pre-Primer and Primer, about twelve of which are not used in the Primer.

Vocabularies

The second study pertains to vocabularies found in various primers. It is given here as a method of evaluation which may be used with the set of basic readers in any given school. These comparisons are made in relation to the *Curriculum Readers* which happen to be the basic readers in our school at the present time.

These vocabularies were studied with the view of determining how many words in each primer are common to the basic primer. The vocabularies were taken from the lists of words at the end of each primer. Words such as *cat* and *cats* were considered as one word. However, all other forms were counted as single words regardless of the base from which they were formed.

In a study of primers by Selke and Selke in 1922 only two books had less than 300 words. Four ranged from 400 to 630 different words.[4]

Another study made by one of the same persons in 1930 shows that the range was from 171 to 594 different words. Eight books had less than 300 different words.[5]

In a study by Hockett and Neeley of books published before 1932 the vocabularies ranged from 219 to 413 different words. Eight books had less than 284 different words.[6]

In a study made by Courtier in 1939, the vocabularies of twenty primers ranged from 166 to 289 different words.[7]

This study of primers published between 1935 and 1941 shows that the

number of different words varies from 156 to 245 with only two exceptions. One book had 278 different words and the other had 318. This is an important item to consider in selecting supplementary books because the load must not be too heavy if the child is to be able adequately to handle the book.

The number of words in common with the basic primer varies from 83-118. Only two books had more than 99 words in common. However, these books were among the lowest in the per cent of words that were repeated. These percentages, which ranged from 38 to 56 of the total number of different words in common with the basic book, are an attempt to correlate the number of different words in the book with the number of words in common with the basic book. As Harris suggests, "The proportion of the words in a book that have been used in books previously read is extremely valuable information for a teacher who wants to select a list of books to be read in sequence."[8]

Either of the above mentioned points, if taken separately, is apt to give a warped picture of the real situation. For instance, it is only natural for a book with a wide vocabulary spread to have more words in common with a basic book than one which has fewer words. At the same time it might introduce many more new words than other books. This would make it much harder for a child to handle. Hence the relation used here uses both criteria.

Table IV shows the number of new words not already introduced in the basic book. This is another factor of great importance. The primer should not introduce a great number of these new words so that the child has to learn them to be able to read the material. We are interested in widening the child's reading as

4 Selke Erich, and Selke, G. A., "A Study of the Vocabularies of Beginning Books in Twelve Reading Methods," *Elementary School Journal.* V. 22, p. 745-49.

5 Selke, Erich, "A Comparative Study of Vocabularies of Twelve Beginning Books," *Journal of Educational Research*, V. 32, p. 369-70.

6 Hockett, John. and Neeley, D P., "Selecting the Next Primer," *California Journal of Elementary Education*, V. 3, May, 1935.

7 Courtier Audrey M. "Criteria for the Selection of Primers," *Elementary English Review*, November, 1939, p. 272.

8 Harris, Albert J., op cit. p. 205.

much as possible. The new books introduced from 68 to 193 new words. Only two books introduced more than 149 new words. Five of the primers had from 68 to 103 new words.

The last column shows the number of words in the basic book not repeated in the other primers. While this factor isn't as important as some other single factors, it should be noted. There is less difference here than in any other item. The range is from 79 to 114. All but two fell between 99-114. This point shows that there is not enough difference to make any book outstanding on this point.

Summary

It is hoped that the information in the tables may be helpful to either principal or teacher in determining where to find materials of any type, whether similar or unlike materials. Units may be built, especially along interest lines. This may prove very helpful in working with remedial cases.

The study of primers published since 1935 shows that the number of different words varies from 156 to 311, with only two books having more than 245 different words. This is in line with the trend over the last twenty years for fewer different words with more repetition.

The number of words common to the basic book varied from 83 to 118. New words introduced varied from 38 per cent to 56 per cent. This factor should be carefully considered when choosing materials to follow in sequence after the basic book has been used.

Principals needs to know the content and vocabularies of the books they ask their teachers to use.

WHY READ?

The program is thorough and demands *work* on the part of child and teacher. They experience books together.

The plan for evaluating the results makes use of observations, conferences, reading diaries, and tests.

The whole approach to reading is that termed the semantics approach—that which stresses the finding of meanings.

At last it has been realized that the key teacher is the elementary teacher. If she will bring good books to the child, she will be a powerful agent in the great field of work undertaken by the democracies— that of searching freely and with creative intent for truth. As someone has said, *great writers can beat bombs.* In *The*
Saturday Review of Literature for June 21, the editor, William Rose Benet says:

> It is up to the writers to show us very clearly what God we have today, and why we should not serve both God and Mammon! It is up to them to keep clearly before us the highest aspirations of the human spirit, and to damn the merely expedient! It is up to them to lead their country, to keep it from profound pitfalls, both on the right and on the left! They abdicate their office when they address their talents to any lesser duties.[6]

Great writers are guides to great readers—those who read not merely as an aid in making a living—in getting the immediacies of life, but who read to find spiritual satisfaction and to get stimulation for personal growth.

6 William Rose Benet "Writers' War Choice," *The Saturday Review of Literature*, June 21, 1941, Volume 24, Number 9.

Two New Studies of Reading

EMMETT A. BETTS
School of Education
The Pennsylvania State College
State College, Pennsylvania

Guiding Children's Reading through Experiences. By Roma Gans. Practical Suggestions for Teaching, Monograph No. 3. Bureau of Publications, Teacher College, Columbia University, 1941. 80c

Recently, Count Korzybski, the general semanticist, described reading as "the reconstruction of the facts behind the symbols." This notion of reading shifts the emphasis from the mechanics of reading to interpretation, in the larger sense, as the crux of communication. It is with the problem of intelligent reading that Professor Roma Gans has come to grips.

The editor's introduction, prepared by Dr. Hollis L. Caswell, prefaces the monograph with cogent statements regarding the increasingly important role of reading in our national life. "Intelligent reading today requires critical interpretation" if the written word is to remain an "instrument for liberating men" rather than a "means of enslavement." Dr. Caswell emphasizes that qualitative rather than mechanical factors should receive major consideration in developing critical comprehension. Hence, the reading program should be based upon the broad experience of children and should be directed toward the relating of these experiences "to purposes for which the children are working."

"Why Teach Reading" is given challenging consideration in the first chapter. Professor Gans first, and quite appropriately, reminds the reader that reading has importance as a *social* tool as well as a *learning* tool. This reminder is followed by short descriptions of "five major reading goals": Guide pupils (1) "to know *when* it is satisfying and to their advantage to read, both in and out of school"; (2) "to know how *to select* what to read; (3) "to *read skillfully* what is selected; (4) "to intended use"; and (5) "to know *how* to appraise critically the content in terms of its *use* ideas gained from reading." These goals place a premium on intrinsic values of reading, on wide experiences in selection rather than "learning" activities prescribed entirely

by a "textbook-conditioned curriculum," on differentiated "needs," on the reflective aspects of comprehension, and the fostering of reading growth through challenging experiences.

Chapter II is a discussion of "Guiding Reading Readiness and Beginning Reading." The reader is warned at the outset that reading readiness and beginning reading are not dichotomous. *Differences*, rather than *similarities*, in experiences, vocabularies, personalities, etc. are underlined, making impractical such requirements as calendar-dicated learnings, rigid daily time-tables, etc. Abbreviated suggestions are given on problems such as: arrangement of the classroom for differentiated learning situations, "language-building" experiences, daily planning, story appreciation, use of labels, discriminative use of "daily memoranda," experience records, "guiding the first use of books," etc. The author might well have given more nearly adequate descriptions of beginning reading activities. Some false impressions undoubtedly will be secured by inexperienced teachers. Furthermore, the emphasis on *oral* reading (audience type, of course) without adequate silent reading preparation can be questioned.

That perplexing and perennial problem of "Increasing Independence in Word Recognition" is the subject of discussion in Chapter III. Challenges are issued to those who use "logical sequences" rather than provide individual guidance in word recognition, to those who neglect "phonetic analysis" in the reading program, and to those who resort to devices, tricks, and games to carry a phonic program unrelated to reading. The author's basic premise in the discussion of specific words is stated (page 34): "In general, it is best to study a word as soon as its importance to the meaning of experience is noticed." While there is considerable sound advice given in this chapter, the reader is left with many appropriate questions unanswered. For example, the use of basal readers is discouraged but few direct suggestions are given for other means of systematic guidance in the develop-

ment of word recognition. Teachers are asking for information which will give them security in dealing with class activities involving phonics, or word analysis.

"Increasing Depth and Accuracy of Comprehension" is the subject of Chapter IV. The teacher's attention is called to two types of questions: the simple recall type which emphasizes *accuracy* of details, and the inferential type which calls attention to "the meanings that come from the interrelationships and implications of these details" and develops *depth* of comprehension. In this respect, the case against uniform textbooks is clearly defined. The author's suggestions for the development of comprehension go beyond the use of many typical cut-and-dried exercises resorted to in a regimented type of instruction, making them commendable reading for teachers at all levels of instruction. Devices which stifle pupil interest, are scorned, but the teacher is not left without positive and fundamentally sound advice.

Certain problems of "Guiding the Progress of Slow Learners in Reading" are identified and briefly discussed in Chapter V. The author very skillfully reminds the reader that different types of problems are presented by those pupils who are "below grade" in their reading achievements. In general, some of these "below grade" pupils have at least normal intelligence and reading capacity, but may require individual guidance for a short period of time in order to become adequately adjusted in reading situations. A small percentage of the "below grade" pupils may be in need of help from specialists in mental and physical health and in remedial reading in order to overcome specific reading disabilities. Others may be slow learners in language situations and therefore have reading needs differing considerably from those of children with normal and superior intelligence. This third group receives primary consideration in this chapter. Emphasis is given to personality needs, the absurdity of grade standards for these pupils, systematic guidance, reading interests, awareness of progress, and co-operative relationships. A more comprehensive treatment—or even a listing—of reading needs and life reading situations for slow learning pupils would have strengthened this chapter.

"How to Evaluate Progress in Reading Growth," Chapter VI, is an especially appropriate inclusion because of the recent development of new techniques for appraising the more elusive and highly significant aspects of growth in language. In this chapter primary consideration is given to evaluation in terms of the "direction or the goals toward which each pupil is being guided." These are the goals described in Chapter I. Effective criticism is leveled at narrow concepts of reading growth, the nature of most available measures, and the post-mortem (or end of the year) use of standardized tests. Attention is forcefully called to the need for cumulative individual records, the selection of standardized tests in terms of language goals, teacher-pupil study of responses on selected standardized tests, and teacher guidance of individual extensive reading activities, so that interests will be broadened. Chapter VI is a challenging and relevant conclusion for the monograph.

One of the chief limitations of this monograph is the scant treatment (undoubtedly necessitated by space limitations) given to a large number of problems in reading instruction. Critical comprehension on the part of the teacher is achieved through a study of careful descriptions rather than through the reading of a summary. On the other hand, this monograph is a substantial contribution to professional literature. Each chapter contributes to the general thesis of developing interpretation in the larger sense by *Guiding Children's Reading through Experiences*. The suggestions provide evidence of careful thinking; the organization of the monograph, with outlined chapter summaries, contributes to reader orientation in a type of education that enhances the respect of the individual; and differentiated instruction is given significance. Those seeking mechanical devices will be disappointed, but those interested in a dynamic consideration of fundamental premises will read and linger for a careful reflection.

Individualization of Instruction in Reading. By May Lazar. Educational Research Bulletin, No. 1. New York City, Division of Instructional Research. Sept., 1941.

Willam T. Harris is credited by many workers as having issued one of the first challenges to regimented practices that grew out of the McGuffey "graded" readers, the "grading of pupils," the "grade" specialization of teachers, a "fixed" or static curriculum, etc. In approximately eighty years, one "administrative" plan after another has been developed to enhance further the possibilities of providing equal learning opportunities for all learners. Plans superimposed upon schools from the

administrator's office have left much to be desired. As a result, attention has been more recently focused upon differentiation within the classroom. Generations later, the challenge issued by William T. Harris and other hardy pioneers in American education is being accepted by an increasing percentage of educators.

Reports of progress in the direction of differentiated instruction were summarized and evaluated by the writer in the May and June (1940) issues of *The American School Board Journal.* Since then an increasing number of reports has been published from schools, both large and small. Now a publication has been issued on the problem by the New York City Public Schools. (May Lazar, *Educational Research Bulletin, No. 1.* New York City, Division of Instructional Research. Sept., 1941. pp. 42).

The wide range of abilities, needs, and interests — *differences* — within any classroom makes imperative a *differentiated* approach to the problem. Before a differentiated program of instruction can be put into operation, reappraisal and reorientation are necessary. First, the basic premises of the educational program must be identified and evaluated in terms of the facts of the situation. If those connected with the education of children believe that a "third grade" actually exists in terms of *likenesses* on any basis, that there is such a thing as a "second grade" word, that *every* child can and should master a given amount of "curriculum," that retardation exists only among those pupils who score below grade "average" on an achievement test, that systematic instruction implies regimentation, that home reports are for the purpose of showing achievement on a narrow list of "fundamentals" in terms of the class average, etc.—then the facts of the school situation must be reappraised in order to achieve adequate orientation. Notions must be made to square more nearly with the facts.

Differentiation of instruction is making a strong bid to supersede the remedial reading of the 1930's. And again, differentiated instruction is likely to take precedence of plans for grouping and for individualized instruction. A program of differentiated instruction involves more than small group and individual activities. Briefly, differentiation of instruction includes *class* planning and activities, *group* planning and activities, and *individual* planning and activities. Through this type of class-

room administration, basic reading skills, abilities, attitudes and information—such as location of information, selection and evaluation, organization, etc.—are given life significance.

In the introduction to *Individualization of Instruction in Reading,* Director E. A. Nifeneckev tells us that this bulletin is to be the first of a series dealing with "different instructional needs." The work in the direction of differentiated instruction was initiated through two reading clinics organized in two centers, the Bronx and Manhattan, in 1938.

Part I of the bulletin deals with "Definition and Background of Individualized Instruction." Emphasis is placed upon individualization as an attitude and as an approach, the multiple causes of reading failure, relationship of teaching methods to reading failure, prevention of reading difficulties, and reorientation basic to individual instruction.

Part II, "Individualization, The Teaching of Reading, and The School Program," deals with the objectives of reading instruction, systematic instruction, vertical or departmentalized versus horizontal or grouping-within-the-classroom reading programs, analysis of needs, techniques, and modern instructional practices. While individual and group reading activities are emphasized, the reader is promised a broader view of differentiated instruction in a subsequent publication.

Dr. Lazar is not unmindful of the role of supervision in reading instruction; therefore Part III includes a brief discussion of general and special supervisory problems. Administrative policies *are* potent factors in a reading situation. Policies dealing with pupil classification, tests, materials, teacher preparation, programing, causes of study, evaluation, etc. can promote or block progress. When the administrator or supervisor allocates the total budget for a fifth grade to the purchase of "fifth grade materials," both teachers and pupils are confronted with a frustrating type of situation.

Part IV is a brief summary of "The Role of Guidance in the Reading Program." This is the essence of this part (page 36): "Formal guidance work in the past has been too largely concerned with the problems of the maladjusted child. The new orientation is toward prevention of maladjustment through a more positive willingness to adopt the instructional program to children's individual needs."

Challenges to those who operate on premises that have produced regimented instruction have not been in vain. If an unjustified overemphasis on *remedial* reading during the 1930's was necessary in order to bring to the fore this whole problem of differentiated instruction, then there are few regrets to express.

The Bureau of Reference, Research and Statistics of the New York City Board of Education has issued a number of excellent reports on reading instruction. This new series of Educational Research Bulletins should merit careful study by educators.

ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING STUDY SKILLS

The ultimate test of the success of our teaching of the study skills is not the score made on the exercise, but the extent of pupils' application in work-study reading, whether it be reading arithmetic problems, maps, recipes, or manuals of instructions. Are John and Mary skilled where they were unskilled before?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Broening, Angela, and others. *Reading for Skill.* Noble and Noble, 1936.

Center, Stella S., and Parsons, Gladys L. *Teaching High School Students to Read.* D. Appleton-Century, 1937. Pp. 22-29.

Dawson, Mildred A. *Directing Learning in the Language Arts,* Part III. Edwards Brothers, 1941. Pp. 109-121.

Dolch, Edward M. *A Manual for Remedial Reading.* Garrard Press, 1939. Pp. 111-123.

Durrell, Donald D. *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities.* World Book Co., 1940. Pp. 231-266.

Gray, William S. ed. *Adjusting Reading Programs to Individuals.* University of Chicago, 1941. Pp. 175-220.

Gray, William S. *Reading in General Education.* American Council on Education, 1940. Pp. 113-186.

Harris, Albert J. *How to Increase Reading Ability.* Longmans, Green, 1940. Pp. 296-301.

Knight, Pearl E. and Traxler, A. E. *Read and Comprehend.* Little, Brown, 1937. Pp. 37-38, 105-195.

McCallister, James M. *Remedial and Corrective Instruction in Reading.* D. Appleton-Century, 1936. Pp. 189-271.

Pennell, Mary E. and Cusack, Alice M. *The Teaching of Reading for Better Living.* Houghton Mifflin, 1935.

Pitkin, Walter B. *The Art of Rapid Reading.* McGraw-Hill, 1929. Pp. 146-195.

Stone, Clarence R. *Better Advanced Reading.* Webster, 1937. Pp. 140-180.

Stone, Clarence R. *Silent and Oral Reading.* Houghton Mifflin, 1936. Pp. 164-223.

Thirty-sixth Yearbook, Part II. "The Teaching of Reading." National Society for the Study of Education, 1937. Pp. 133-182.

Yoakam, Gerald A. *Reading and Study.* Macmillan, 1933.

Editorial

READING FOR PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ACTION

What is happening now is largely the working out of educational methods and philosophies. Education prepared for the attack on Pearl Harbor and the collapse of France; education of a different sort made possible the evacuation of Dunkirk, and the defense of the Phillipines. We are watching our educational theories of the past twenty years being tested. And watching, we shall get answers to two questions: Does it work and To what end?

·From the editoral in the March *Elementary English Review*, 1942.

WHAT WE DO NOW—every act and thought—determines our future, as our work in the past determined the present. What we think and teach today builds the lives of our children and ourselves. That is as true for the teaching of reading as it is for every other area. Reading is the key to education in a democracy. It is indispensable for war as it is for peace. No nation can long fight for its political freedom or win victories with an illiterate army.

Today we are recognizing the military importance of literacy by setting up schools in our army camps to teach the men who are defending democracy to read and write. Let us register that as one of the major failures of our society. The N. E. A. Research Division reports in *Schools and the 1940 Census* that 76 per cent of the Negro selectees and 11 per cent of the white selectees in an army camp near Washington, D. C., were found to be functionally illiterate. Recently the director of the C.C.C. reported that 5 per cent of the young men in the C.C.C. "were totally unable to read and write when they entered the Corps and a much higher percentage are functionally illiterate."

Teachers of reading and all teachers have a responsibility to see not only that the young people in our elementary and high schools learn to read but that society insures this primary ability for every capable resident of the United States. The 16,000,000 youths and adults in the United States who cannot pass a standardized reading and writing test as well as the average fourth-grade child, and are therefore functionally illiterate in an industrial society, are a challenge and a threat to any nation. Their presence is incompatible with either political or economic democracy. The problem must be attacked in every community under the leadership of the school. The immediate liquidation of illiteracy in the United States is a war necessity and priority number one for our schools.

But we face a more serious problem than the elimination of elementary illiteracy. The development of reading skills and abilities are merely means to an end. What end? Today the scales have dropped and we can see clearly. It is no robot pattern of techniques that we build. It is not word recognition that is our end. Increasing numbers among us believe that the purpose of reading as of all education can be nothing less today than the conscious building of a definite society. We are coming to the conclusion that it is our problem to help children, youth, and adults decide what the new form and meaning of that democracy shall be.

151

Reading is personal and social action. Good reading not only senses what is between the lines but searches back of the words to find the purpose and watch the effects. Every reading act should fit into the pattern of our effort to improve the welfare of the people of the United States. The test of reading is not understanding of printed symbols, but action. The aim of the teaching of reading is good food, clothing, shelter, health, and work and recreation and the cultural enrichment of our people. If the reading program results in understanding about nutrition but does not improve the nourishment of our underfed millions, then it has failed the only important test. The well-being of the people is the final measure. Standardized tests are only preliminary.

The teacher of reading can envision the whole process in which interpretation of symbols on the printed page plays only a part. She can direct the organization of methods and materials so that every child and every parent see reading only in its various relationships to our larger personal and social purpose. Then critical thinking and propaganda analysis will be considered as means to the end that all people everywhere shall live better tomorrow than they did today. Teachers who work in this way are striking at the Axis with a weapon against which the "master-race" has no defenses. They are building a democracy for which we will fight on to victorious peace.

—*HOLLAND ROBERTS*
Stanford University